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Thank you Senator Bye and Representative Walker and the members of the appropriations committee for the opportunity to testify in support of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. My name is Arvia Walker and I'm the Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and I also sit on the Steering Committee of Young Women Rising, which is a young professional group ran by PCSW.

The work that is done by the PCSW is critical and very important to me. Being a women and on top of that, being a women of color in the State of Connecticut, I have found myself looking for a space that advocates on behalf of women and girls from all backgrounds. The Commission not only does this but they do it in a way that makes me feel that I can bring my full self to the work that we do with one another. One of the many projects that we have worked on together as a team is a campaign called, "Project Period." Project Period focuses on educating the public on the high cost of feminine hygiene products and its impact on people who are experiencing homelessness and hardships. As Young Women Rising, we were able to collect over 200 bags with 2 months' supply of products for the families at My Sister's Place in Hartford, CT.

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, along with the other commissions that serve on behalf of marginalized communities, has been a voice, and a resource to our communities. We cannot afford to lose those who are advocating on behalf of populations that don't have the resources or capacity to do it on their own. We deserve to have a dedicated and fearless voice at the State Capitol. The commission has served to be that for many years and for that I am grateful.